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ABSTRACT

Summaries of research findings on the following topics are compiled in this document: (1) students in schools with well-equipped resource centers and teacher-librarians perform better on achievement tests; (2) developing student competence in research and study skills is most effective when integrated with classroom instruction through cooperative planning and team teaching; (3) teacher-librarians who are extroverted and less cautious tend to be more successful; (4) teacher-librarians in secondary schools are not as involved in cooperative programs with classroom colleagues as principals, teachers, and teacher-librarians think they should be; (5) secondary school resource centers are more effective when designed according to the needs of the instructional program and student population; (6) students generally use libraries as a complement to school resource centers and generally prefer books to other resources; (7) the role of the principal is the key factor in the development of effective school library programs; (8) school library media coordinators have positive effects on library program development in the school district, but experience role conflict in their work; (9) teacher-librarians need to publish more about teacher-librarianship and school library programs; and (10) continuing education opportunities need to be increased for teacher-librarians. Each of the findings is presented on a separate page together with additional comments on the research and several references. (SD)

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WHAT WORKS

Research: The Implications for Professional Practice

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Summary of EL Research Findings to Date

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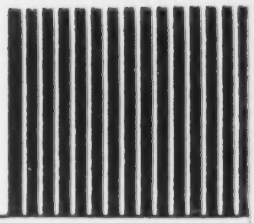

Summary of EL Research Findings to Date

Students in schools with well-equipped resource centers and professional teacher-librarians will perform better on achievement tests for reading comprehension and basic research skills. [*EL* 14:5]

The development of student competence in research and study skills is most effective when integrated with classroom instruction through cooperative program planning and team teaching by two equal teaching partners -- the classroom teacher and the teacher-librarian. [*EL* 14:4]

Teacher-librarians who are less cautious and more extraverted tend to be more successful. [*EL* 15:2]

Teacher-librarians in secondary schools are not as involved in cooperative program planning and team teaching with classroom colleagues as equal teaching partners to the extent that principals, teachers and teacher-librarians themselves believe that they should be. [*EL* 14:3]

Secondary school resource centers are more effective when designed according to the needs of the instructional program and of the student population. [*EL* 15:3]

Students generally use libraries as a complement to schools resource centers and prefer books to other resources. [*EL* 16:4]

The role of the principal is the key factor in the development of an effective school library program. [*EL* 16:3]

The school library media coordinator/director has a positive effect on school library program development in the school district but suffers role conflict in his/her work. [*EL* 16:2]

Teacher-librarians need to assume more responsibility for writing about teacher-librarianship and school library programs for professional journals read by teachers and administrators. [*EL* 15:4]

More and more varied continuing education opportunities need to be provided for teacher-librarians in order for them to pursue their own professional growth. [*EL* 16:5]

WHAT WORKS

RESEARCH: THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Research Finding:

Students in schools with well-equipped resource centers and professional teacher-librarians will perform better on achievement tests for reading comprehension and basic research skills.

Comment:

There is a positive relationship between the level of resource center service available and student scholastic achievement.

In schools with good resource centers and the services of a teacher-librarian (TL), students perform significantly better on tests for basic research skills, including locational skills, outlining and notetaking and the knowledge and use of reference materials, including the use of a dictionary and encyclopedia.

In schools with good resource centers and full-time TLs, students perform significantly better in the area of reading comprehension and in their ability to express ideas effectively concerning their readings.

The greatest predictor of student achievement (of the school resource center collection size and expenditure and public library collection size and expenditure) is school resource center collection size.

Students in larger population centers and in larger secondary schools have a higher level of resource center service available to them, in terms of collection size, than students in smaller cities and in smaller schools.

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WHAT WORKS

RESEARCH: THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Research Finding:

The development of student competence in research and study skills is most effective when integrated with classroom instruction through cooperative program planning and team teaching by two equal teaching partners — the classroom teacher and teacher-librarian.

Comment:

Minimal gains in research and study skills can be achieved through instruction by the classroom teacher or the teacher-librarian (TL) alone. Effective instruction depends on the cooperative effort of both teacher and TL; stated another way, scheduled library skills classes taught solely by the TL are not as effective as integrated, cooperatively planned and taught programs.

Students in flexibly scheduled schools believe that the resource center is more useful in their school work than students in scheduled schools. Flexibly scheduled resource centers provide greater academic benefits.

The TL and school resource center can have a significant effect on student achievement in information skills development and content areas when used effectively.

The use of the TL to provide spare periods or preparation time for the classroom teacher negates the possibility of a successful school program.

The term "library skills" is misleading since many of these same skills are taught by classroom teachers in various areas of the curriculum but are labelled differently (information skills; research and study skills; problem-solving skills; etc.).

Educators of TLs need to provide more leadership and instruction for TLs in cooperative program planning and teaching and in articulating and teaching research and study skills. TLs should have teaching qualifications and classroom experience prior to further training as a TL.

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WHAT WORKS

RESEARCH: THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Research Finding:

Teacher-librarians who are less cautious and more extroverted tend to be more successful.

Comment:

Teacher-librarians tend to be responsible, emotionally stable, cautious, intellectually curious, energetic, non-assertive, and less trusting of colleagues.

TLs in exemplary resource centers are extroverted and independent; as leaders they have "tough poise".

The best set of predictors of high circulation of materials in the resource center is a high extroversion score and a high degree of curriculum involvement by the TL.

There is a significant negative correlation between cautiousness and curricular effectiveness.

High role conflict scores are significantly associated with low cautiousness, responsibility and emotional stability; high role ambiguity scores are significantly associated with low responsibility and emotional stability.

TLs differ significantly from librarians as a group as measured in 1957; they are more extroverted, demonstrate less neurotic tendency, and are more sociable.

References:

Charter, Jody Beckley. *Case studies of six exemplary public high school library media programs.* Florida State University, 1982. (43.02, 293-A — #DA8215239)

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Madaus, James Richard. *Curriculum involvement: teaching structures, and personality factors of librarians in school media programs.* University of Texas, 1974. 123 pages. Ph.D. dissertation. (5436-A — #75-4965)

WHAT WORKS

RESEARCH: THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Research Finding:

Teacher-librarians in secondary schools are not as involved in cooperative program planning and team teaching with classroom colleagues as equal teaching partners to the extent that principals, teachers and teacher-librarians themselves believe that they should be.

Comment:

If the teacher uses the resource center and consults with the teacher-librarian (TL) about planning student work, then the use of the resource center is greater. In fact, students rate schools more highly when there is agreement and communication among principal, teachers and TLs regarding program objectives and where there is planned, consistent and integrated instruction in library use. Student perceptions are valid indicators of program quality and, when carefully documented, can guide expenditures for resource center support. Districts should seek program evaluations annually from graduating students.

Important factors which affect TL involvement in curricular issues include the principal's attitude towards the TL's role, teacher preference for TLs with successful teaching experience and a teacher's frame of reference, the amount of support staff, lack of teacher understanding of the role of the TL and the potential of the resource center. The evidence is inconclusive as to the extent to which the personality of the TL makes a significant difference.

Qualified TLs rate curricular tasks as more important to their role than those without additional qualifications.

Since principals, teachers and teacher-librarians all agree on the importance of cooperative program planning and teaching, all three should be involved in resolving issues mitigating against substantial involvement. TLs need to organize more in-service training for colleagues; and educators of TLs need to revise programs to include courses which foster cooperation and understanding between teachers and TLs.

References:

Corr, Graham Peter. *Factors that affect the school library media specialist's involvement in curriculum planning and implementation in small high schools in Oregon.* University of Oregon, 1979. 183 pages. Ph.D. dissertation. (40:6,2955—A, #7927234).

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WHAT WORKS

RESEARCH: THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Research Finding:

Secondary school resource centers are more effective when designed according to the needs of the instructional program and of the student population.

Comment:

Educational specifications developed through the cooperative efforts of teacher-librarians, teachers and administrators result in a well-planned program, and working with the architect, a physical facility designed to support this program.

Secondary school resource centers should be planned for greater flexibility. There is no optimum design for resource centers; each situation presents different problems; there are basic kinds of spaces necessary, however, regardless of the uniqueness of the school philosophy.

There has been a growing awareness of the need for instructional areas for independent study in the secondary school.

Three separate areas are required for effective programs: a general study and reading area, an animated (activity) area, and supportive work spaces for resource center staff. The general study area should constitute 50% of the total space, the animated areas 25-30%, and supportive areas 20-25%. The general study and reading area should be capable of seating 10% of the student population and additional spaces such as media and conference rooms, 5% of the student body. A minimum of 30 square feet per student accommodated is recommended. Space for aural and visual instructional techniques is vital.

The resource center should be located on the main floor of the building and adjacent to the majority of instructional areas but removed from areas which create excessive noise.

Greater care should be taken in planning facilities. More attention should be paid to spatial relationships. The use of color, natural and artificial lighting and architectural lines are important elements. The resource center should be equipped and furnished with those amenities which are appropriate for the physiological and psychological needs of teenagers rather than adults. This includes otpimum thermal environment, furniture and color schemes.

While facilities are important, students are less concerned with the physical features of the resource center — size, location, furniture and attractiveness — than with academic relevance, accessible high quality materials and approachable and effective teacher-librarians.

References:

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WHAT WORKS

RESEARCH: THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Research Finding:

Students generally use libraries as a complement to school resource centers and prefer books to other resources.

Comment:

TLs believe that students are more aware of resources and services than they really are.

Only a small percentage of students use the resource center regularly and these tend to be the better students.

In order of frequency, students use books (through the card catalog) as the medium of choice, periodicals (through the *Readers' guide)* second and encyclopedias third. Periodicals used tend to be in the resource center.

Students have a more positive attitude to the resource center when there is a full-time TL.

Most students use the public and/or college library as a complement to the school resource center.

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WHAT WORKS

RESEARCH: THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Research Finding:

The role of the principal is the key factor in the development of an effective school library program.

Comment:

The attitude of the principal to the role of the teacher-librarian (TL) affects the TL's involvement in curricular issues.

Exemplary school library resource centers are characterized by strong administrative support.

Principals in schools with exemplary resource center programs establish evaluation procedures, integrate the resource center in instructional programs, encourage student and teacher use and provide flexible scheduling.

TLs continue to view the support of the principal as critical to program improvement.

Principals may serve as a barrier to the improvement of resource center programs if they do not perceive the need for change and do not have the necessary expertise on which to base improvement decisions.

References:

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WHAT WORKS

RESEARCH: THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Research Finding:

The school library media coordinator/director has a positive effect on school library program development in the school district but suffers role conflict in his/her work.

Comment:

The existence of a library media director results in significantly higher implementation of professional guiding principles for personnel, budget, purchasing, production, access and delivery systems, program evaluation, collections and facilities.

The higher the director's position is placed in the hierarchy, the wider the range of activities that can be performed in the development and regulation of school library programs and services.

The director suffers role conflict due to differences of expectations and perceptions of performance among and within principals, teacher-librarians and the supervisor of the director.

The director suffers conflict in realizing the organization's objectives due to the real, practical job world; teacher-librarians are aware of a gap between the real and ideal role behavior of the director insofar as the organization's goals are concerned, also resulting in conflict for the director.

The director finds that "the real world" makes it more difficult to attend to human needs than one ideally believes that one might be able to; teacher-librarians believe there exists a very evident gap between the real and ideal world insofar as human needs factors that they want the director to display toward them, again creating more conflict for the director.

Perception of performance is uncertain among the groups. The director works most closely with: principals, teacher-librarians and the director's supervisor.

References:

A comparison of perceptions and expectations for a central administrative leadership role of library media director as an indicator of his/her role behavior. Andwood, Donald Edward. St. John's University, 1984. Ed. D. dissertations. (45/03-A. p. 693).

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WHAT WORKS

RESEARCH: THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Research Finding:

Teacher-librarians need to assume more responsibility for writing about teacher-librarianship and school library programs for professional journals read by teachers and administrators.

Comment:

An accepted means of communication with teachers, that of writing in professional journals, is not being used to its fullest potential in communicating the contribution of teacher-librarians and school resource centers to education.

Articles concerning teacher-librarians tend to be accurate only when written by teacher-librarians themselves or those intimately involved with good programs. Teacher-librarians are occasionally described in disparaging terms by others.

General journals in education tend to mention teacher-librarians and media more than curriculum and association journals.

Simple identification of the resource center appears much more frequently than discussion about teacher-librarians and the resource center program.

Where articles do appear about the teacher-librarian and resource center they are more generally directed to the general aspects of teaching than to the needs of specific subject areas. The area of curricular emphasis has tended to be language arts rather than social studies, science and other core areas.

Education is emphasizing research and development but these are virtually missing in articles about library programs which appear in journals for administrators.

Acceptable levels of financing resource centers are seldom mentioned in journals aimed at school administrators. Where finances are discussed they concentrate on expensive facilities but not the ongoing expense of operation.

The cause and effect between the resources necessary for a good program and good service is omitted from journals for administrators.

Education articles in journals for administrators which mention the library program dropped from 224 in 1954-1955 to 95 in 1960 to 61 in 1969.

Information about the teacher-librarian and resource center, when included in journals for teachers and administrators, does not emphasize the curricular role of the teacher-librarian.

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WHAT WORKS

RESEARCH: THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Research Finding

More and more varied continuing education opportunities need to be provided for teacher-librarians in order for them to pursue their own professional growth.

Comment:

Teacher-librarians respond more to professional development opportunities which are of high quality and which offer new and creative ideas applicable to the job site.

Time, location and inferior quality detract TLs from attending professional development programs.

Programs should be offered by school districts on serving specific client groups, such as special education teachers and students.

University continuing education programs should reflect the expressed needs of TLs, such as microcomputer applications to their role and the resource center.

Workshops presented at conferences can provide effective continuing education by effecting changes in knowledge and attitudes toward a particular topic.

Continuing education opportunities need to be provided in a variety of formats and approaches.

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